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2026 4Q The Gift of Prophecy
Lesson 6: The Prophetic Writings

by Tim Jennings

The lesson focuses on different aspects of the biblical record—different writing styles, different writers, methods of writing etc.

But regardless of those details, what is the purpose of the Bible?

- A God inspired revelation of truth.
    - But what do we mean by truth?
    - Is it a code book of deeds to be done and sins to be shunned?
    - Is it a list of the dos and don't of life?
    - Is it a dictation of what to believe and what not to believe?
    - Is it a didactic explanation of the answers to the complex problems?
    - Or is it a book of evidence, of history, of how reality works?

The Bible is a record of history actually lived out in the context of God's divine actions to save and His revelations of reality that we could not discover without God informing us.

Most of Scripture functions like a pathology textbook showing the sickness of sin; what happens when people do not trust God and instead live animated by the spirit of fear and selfishness and God's patient, loving, merciful walking alongside them with constant offers of truth, love, and restoration if they will choose truth and trust Him. This ultimately leads to God's solution to save humanity and that is Jesus who became human and overcame as a human to provide us salvation.

The Bible is to be read as a revelation of history with documentation of the evidence of what free beings do when they break away from God's design and God's actions through history to save us from this terminal sin condition.

SUNDAY

Read the bottom question,

- How would you answer someone who says that we cannot trust the Bible because we do not have the original manuscripts? *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2026*, *The Gift of Prophecy*, p. 47.

Many arguments have been made about the reliability of the Bible because of the consistency between the various recovered manuscripts, like the Dead Sea scrolls showing consistent agreement with other manuscripts in content and meaning, with only minor variations in spelling.

But a reality-based way of answering this is to present the question this way:

- How can we trust Einstein's equation $E=mc^2$ if we don't have his original handwritten manuscript with this equation on it?

Why should we believe that Einstein's equation is valid if all we have are books with the equation in it and we have not examined the original manuscript in his handwriting?

Do we need to have the original manuscript to test whether the equation is true?

Do we need to have the original Bible manuscripts to test whether what they teach are true?

Questions like this are designed to mislead and deceive. They move minds away from reality to believe based on authority of who wrote it. Thus, the lead people not to think, is what the Bible says true, let's test it and see, but to can we confirm who wrote it.

What is the reality-based reason to have confidence or trust in Einstein's equation?

What is the reality-basis reason to have confidence or trust in the Bible?

Conversely, should we believe the equation because Einstein wrote it?
Should we believe something we read in the Bible simply because an inspired writer wrote it, or should we test it to see if it is true and believe only when we are convinced by weight of evidence that it is true?

Paul wrote,

- One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. Romans 14:5 NIV84.

Is Paul saying that there is no difference between the sacredness of various days? No, he is saying that it doesn't make any difference to a person if they are not persuaded in their own mind.

For instance, is it true that Jesus is the Son of God our Savior? But for people to be benefited by that doesn't each person need to be fully persuaded in their own mind?

And is a person persuaded on something if the only reason they believe it is because the Bible said it? Remember our math text book example?

The problem with the Bible said it I believe it approach is that one can choose to believe the right words of the Bible, memorize and quote them, and still believe the wrong thing.

Any examples?

John 8 where the Pharisees quoted the biblical record and claimed God and Abraham as their Father, but Jesus told them that they were of their father the devil.

They had the words of the Bible, but didn't understand what it actually means to be a child of Abraham or a child of God.

How would you explain what it means to be a child of Abraham and a child of God?

If we become convinced that someone is a genuine prophet of the Lord, does that then mean we should trust what they say or write?

Can a person inspired by God make mistakes? Does that mean the message they were given is invalid or not inspired?

Read Galatians 2:11-14:

- But when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him in public, because he was clearly wrong. Before some men who had been sent by James arrived there, Peter had been eating with the Gentile brothers and sisters. But after these men arrived, he drew back and would not eat with the Gentiles, because he was afraid of those who were in favour of circumcising them. The other Jewish brothers and sisters also started acting like cowards along with Peter; and even Barnabas was swept along by their cowardly action. When I saw that they were not walking a straight path in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you have been living like a Gentile, not like a Jew. How, then, can you try to force Gentiles to live like Jews?" Galatians 2:11-14 GNT.

Was Peter wrong in this case? Should we still recognize 1 and 2 Peter as inspired Scripture? Why?

How was it Paul was able to oppose him in this case? Do we have any evidence that Paul had a vision at that moment, or an angel from heaven came to Paul with a special message in that moment? What enabled Paul to oppose Peter on this point? The truth! Paul knew the truth and spoke the truth as recorded in Galatians.

So if you were a member of that early church and Paul was not there, could you have stood up and opposed Peter with the same truth Paul did?

Was that truth available for any believer to understand and know?

What about today? How can we tell if someone who has had the prophetic gift is telling the truth or not? We must study and understand reality, truth, integrated for ourselves, like the Bereans.

Can prophets, those inspired by God to write the Scriptures sometimes be mistaken about something?

- I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) 1Corinthans 1:14-16 NIV84.

Does it give us insight into how inspiration works? What is inspired by God—Paul's memory of who he baptized, or the gospel message he is commissioned to share?

Or do we believe the Bible is divine dictation and if there is some data mistake like this does it undermine your confidence in the Bible?

The Holy Spirit did not dictate the Scriptures but inspired people with truth that the writer then recorded with their own words, experiences, and memories—and their memories of details are subject to the same errors as all human beings.

But there are other concerns in trusting prophets, when we conclude the prophet is from the Lord. Do you recall the story of the old and young prophet recorded in 1 Kings 13?

The young prophet was sent with a message to Jeroboam. This is the story where the altar breaks in two, the king points his hand at the prophet and tells the soldiers to arrest him. The king's hand withers, and he cries for the prophet to pray for him, which he does and his hand is restored. Then the king invites him to stay and eat with him. And the prophet replies with:

- "Even if you were to give me half your possessions, I would not go with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water here. For I was commanded by the word of the LORD: 'You must not eat bread or drink water or return by the way you came.' " So he took another road and did not return by the way he had come to Bethel." 1 Kings 13:8-10 NIV84.

On the way home he is met by another prophet, the older prophet, who invites him home to eat with him. The young prophet tells the older prophet the same thing, that he was instructed by the Lord not to stop to eat or drink. But the older prophet replies with,

- "I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the LORD: 'Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.' " (But he was lying to him.) 1 Kings 13:18 NIV84.

The younger prophet went home with him and ate with him, and then the scripture says:

- While they were sitting at the table, the word of the LORD came to the old prophet who had brought him back. He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, "This is what the LORD says: 'You have defied the word of the LORD and have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you. You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you not to eat or drink. Therefore your body will not be buried in the tomb of your fathers.' " 1 Kings 13:20-22 NIV84.

The Bible doesn't say the older prophet is a false prophet, a prophet of Baal, or another false god, but that the word of the Lord came upon the older prophet and he prophesied what was going to happen and this is what the Bible says:

- As he went on his way, a lion met him on the road and killed him, and his body was thrown down on the road, with both the donkey and the lion standing beside it. 1 Kings 13:24 NIV84.

Notice the lion killed the younger prophet, but not the donkey and the donkey didn't run away, indicating this is not a natural event.

What is the lesson in all of this?

- First context, what did the young prophet just do prior to this? Confronted Jeroboam about false worship and the very instructions about not stopping on the way to eat or drink were given to the king. What happens to the impact of his message to the king, if the king finds out he did stop with someone else and nothing happened? Would this cause the king to doubt the veracity of the warning from God? So, did God need to have this young prophet die in order to validate the young prophet as legitimate, honest, and reliable spokesperson for Him, because the young prophet made a choice that undermined his own credibility?
    - In other words, did God intervene to protect not only the saving message to Jeroboam, but the reputation of the young prophet as a genuine prophet, not a false prophet?
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- Do we believe what a prophet says because we believe they are a true prophet blessed with the special gift of prophesy by God and we are not allowed to think and question?
- Or do we recognize that even when someone is a prophet from God we are still required to think, understand, and decide for ourselves?
- Are people whom God blesses with various gifts, whether prophecy, or strength, or wisdom no longer able to make mistakes or errors? Do they live flawless and sinless lives once inspired by God?
    - Moses and the rock
    - Aaron and the golden calf
    - Samson
    - Solomon
    - Paul going back to Jerusalem despite being warned by God that he would lose his freedom if he did.
- Weren't all of these individuals blessed by God, called by God to various ministry, empowered and enlightened by God—and yet did all of them still do wrong and some directly rebel?
- And did their bad choices and errors mean they were cast off by God?
- Did some of their choices curtail, interfere, interrupt, or undermine their mission, their usefulness for God or cut short their work?
- So what is the lesson of the young and old prophet?
- Why did the young prophet do what he did? Because he was capable of making mistakes, being misled, distrusting God, being deceived.

- Yet he was not cast off by God, his choice still had consequences. He reaped temporal death, sleep death, but that doesn't mean he lost eternal life.
- And why would God allow it? What is the other option—to take away the freedom of the man? What would happen if God did that?
- And does including this story in the Bible have any reality-based benefit to those who seek to understand truth, love, freedom, God's kingdom and how God saves?
- We each have the responsibility as the gate-keeper to our own hearts and minds—Jesus stands at the door and knocks, but we decide whether we open the door and let Him in or close the door. We decide who we love, trust, and what we believe.
- The young prophet had the responsibility to choose in governance of himself to cling to the truth He had received from God and not replace that truth with the claims and reports from another prophet. The righteous response to the older prophet is: *Since God communicated with me directly His will on this mission, then if God wants me to change what He has called me to do He is certainly capable of telling me directly, and since He hasn't told me directly I will complete the mission He gave me as He gave it to me. After I return home and complete my mission, I would love the opportunity to come back and share a meal with you*.

MONDAY

The lesson focuses on multiple literary styles and genres, the use of metaphor, symbols, parables, poetry, etc.

One example cited in the lesson is parallelism, in the middle of the second paragraph it reads,

- Parallelism is when subsequent lines repeat or sometimes contrast with earlier lines. For example: "In that day a man will look to his Maker, and his eyes will have respect for the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 17:7, NKJV). "Maker" and "Holy One" are in parallel to each other, each image giving us more information about the other. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2026*, *The Gift of Prophecy*, p. 48.

This is a common literary style throughout the Bible, and can help us understand the true meaning of things, any examples come to mind?

- I want your constant love, not your animal sacrifices.
  I would rather have my people know me than burn offerings to me.
  Hosea 6:6 GNT.

The animal sacrifice and burn offerings easily demonstrate the parallelism, but is that all or does the first phrase of each also demonstrate the same method?

I want your constant love parallels with knowing God, and what did Jesus say was life eternal?

- Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3 NIV84.

Life eternal is restoration to constant love for God and Jesus—which is different than cognitive knowledge about God, learning doctrines, doing rituals, joining a church organization.

Why is constant love for God life eternal?

It is the protocol of life, the basis of life, the design law of life, the way life is built to operate. Love and trust connects us to God and is established upon truth, reality, the truth of who God is. Love casts out fear, insecurity, and the drive to protect self. Fear and survival drive causes one to run from God to cut themselves off from life itself. Thus the Bible teaches:

- He who pursues righteousness and love finds life Proverbs 21:21 NIV84.

- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Romans 13:10 NIV84.

- The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Galatians 5:14 NIV84

- Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matthew 22:37-40 NIV84.

And understanding this is why Paul wrote:

- If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 NVI84.

What does it matter what abilities one has or what deeds one does if one is still terminal and dying? Without being reborn with the Spirit of love and trust, it results in nothing, literally we become nothing.

This was not new teaching it was the teaching from the beginning

- Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Deuteronomy 6:5-6 NIV84.

- The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live. Deuteronomy 30:6 NIV84.

- This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. Jeremiah 31:33–34 and Hebrew 8:10-11

Only as we respond to truth and choose to trust and experience God's love restored within do we have life.

What is Satan's power? Lies and what do lies do? Break the circle of love and trust and corrupt the spirit with fear and selfishness causing the living being to close their heart to God, run from Him, and cut themselves off from life.

If God does not act the living being will die. But God is love and God does not simply let go, He sacrifices Himself for the purpose of saving us from the infection of lies, fear, and selfishness and restoring us to love and trust in Him and giving us a new life, a new spirit. And that is accomplished in reality, only through Jesus Christ.

But is there a problem an obstacle to God bringing His truth and love into hearts and minds to save people? What is the problems that interferes with God's ability to save people?

1. The sin condition, fear and selfishness, distorts our ability to accurately see, comprehend, understand and appreciate the evidence. We must be assisted by God, by the Spirit of God, in order to respond to truth and love.
2. There is an enemy to God who is active who works to inflame fear, selfishness, distrust and distort the evidence.

Satan works to corrupt all the evidence and twist the meaning of all God says and does so that people either deny the existence of God or if they still believe in Him, they believe He is a being who isn't ultimately untrustworthy and requires something done to Him to save us from Him, from His inflicted punishment for sin.

And the root lie behind it all, that we so easily accept, is that God's law is imposed rules enforced through punishment.

This so easily accepted because our natural spirit of fear and survival seeks safety and security, seeks order, seeks structure through the means of our fallen nature—imposed law and external force and control. Thus the unconverted heart naturally aligns with the lie that God's law is imposed and justice is externally applied force to coerce and maintain order.

And this lie about God's law is so deeply engrained that even when people read the Bible and see what it says they all too often still interpret it through the imposed law lie.

We are talking about parallelism, so let's look at an example where parallelism used in Scripture would lead us to the truth, but how English translations have mistranslated the words to convey ideas more consistent with the imposed law lie.

Just to set the stage for the difference:

- Design law the laws that the Creator built into the operations of reality and breaking them causes injury, suffering and death and requires the Creator to heal.
- Imposed law are made up rules that reality does not operate upon and requires the legal authorities to have a legal system of investigation, judgment, and use power to inflict punishment for rule-breaking.

Read Proverbs 10:16 from the New English Translation uses antithetical parallelism where the two lines are intended to contrast each other. I am using the NET translation because this version gives detailed commentary to their rationale in translation so we can follow their understanding of the Hebrew and why they chose the English rendering they did.

- The reward which the righteous receive is life;
  the recompense which the wicked receive is judgment.
  Proverbs 10:16 NET.

The rendering leads the reader to think that the recompense of the wicked is judicial think that the NET commentary on this verse rightly recognizes the principle of cause and effect in its discussion of the righteous:

- "Recompense" The noun פְּעֻלָּה (*pé'ullah*) has a two-fold range of meanings: (1) "work; deed" and (2) "reward; recompense" (BDB 821 s.v.). There is a clear correlation between a person's conduct and its consequences. Rewards are determined by moral choices. What one receives in life depends on the use of gifts and a righteous character."

Yet in the very same verse, after acknowledging this cause-and-effect principle of design law for the righteous, the NET introduces a different concept for the wicked by rendering the outcome as "judgment," which can imply an imposed judicial punishment rather than a naturally reaped consequence.
Ironically, the NET commentary itself continues to describe the imagery in terms of sowing and reaping:

- "Harvest" – The term תְּבוּאַת (*tévu'at,* "harvest; yield") is used figuratively here (hypocatastasis), drawing an implied comparison between the agricultural yield of a

farmer's labors with the consequences of the actions of the wicked. They will "reap" (= judgment) what they "sow" (= sin).

Despite acknowledging that the Hebrew describes sowing and reaping, the assumption that God's law functions like human law is so deeply embedded in Christian thought that the natural cause-and-effect relationship is displaced. Rather than translating the verse to show that the wicked naturally reap what they sow, the NET introduces the judicial concept of externally imposed judgment or punishment by God. Its commentary explains this interpretive shift as follows:

- The term חַטָּאת (*khatta't,* "sin") functions as a metonymy of cause (= sin) for effect (= punishment). In contrast to the righteous who receive a reward, the wicked receive punishment for their sin. *The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible; The NET Bible* (Pr 10:16). Biblical Studies Press).

How I would render this would be:

- Living in harmony with God's design laws
  results in strength, joy, and life,
  but breaking the laws of life produces only fear, selfishness, and decay.
  Proverbs 10:16 REM.

Here is another place where Bible translations can do accurate linguistic translations, but because all translations have a variety of options when translating, the underlying assumptions and premises impact how the final rending goes.

For example, the Hebrew word מִשְׁפָּט [mishpat /mish·pawt/] occurs 421 times in the Old Testament and is variously translated as "judgment," "manner," "right," "cause," "ordinance," "lawful," "order," "worthy," "fashion," "custom," "discretion," "law," "measure," "sentence," and numerous other terms.

This breadth of possible meanings allows considerable latitude in interpretation.

One's preconceived ideas about law and justice impact how one translates.

For instance, in Proverbs 2:8 the Hebrew word מִשְׁפָּט [mishpat /mish·pawt/] is rendered "justice" by the NCV and NKJV, "righteous" by the GNT and the NET, "judgment" by the KJV, and "just" by the NIV84. These various renderings can lead to significantly different understandings of the text.

The New Century Version translates this verse:

- He makes sure that justice is done, and he protects those who are loyal to him. Proverbs 2:8 NCV

This can suggest an external use of power to administer justice and protect those who demonstrate loyalty—much like human rulers who establish arbitrary laws and enforce them through external authority.

The New King James Version reads,

- He guards the paths of justice, and preserves the way of His saints Proverbs 2:8 NKJV.

Do these two renderings, both legitimately and linguistically accurately done, convey the exact same meaning to you? And the question is, do they convey the most accurate intention of the Proverb?

My rendering would be,

- For he guards the only safe paths by sustaining his design laws, and guides and protects the life of those who love and trust him. Proverbs 2:8 REM.

Why would my version be more likely to be accurate in the meaning?

The lives of people such as Stephen, Paul, and many others are safeguarded through their trust in Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, reproducing within them the living law of truth and love. This does not mean they are necessarily protected from physical death; rather, their eternal life is safeguarded in Christ, even when their earthly lives are sacrificed. This is not an arbitrary exercise of external power to inflict punishment or distribute rewards, but the outworking of divine power through the design-law avenues of truth, love and freedom, built into the very nature of intelligent living beings for the restoration of righteousness within the believer (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Another example of translating with the imposed law idea accepted verses the design law, lets compare Psalm 32 from the NKJV and the REM

Psalm 32

- Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. Psalm 32:1-2 NKJV.
- Happy are they whose wicked minds are restored to perfect purity, whose selfishness is eradicated. Happy is the person whose infected heart the Lord transforms to perfection, in whose mind there is no deceit. Psalm 32:1-2 REM.

- When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Psalm 32:3-4 NKJV.
- When I held onto my guilt and shame, refusing to talk to God, I stressed myself and my body decayed because every day I screamed, "no!" denying the truth. But day and night your healing

hand pressed firmly upon me; my resistance evaporated like water in the summer heat. Psalm 32:3-4 REM.

- I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near him. You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Psalm 32:5-7 NKJV.
- Then I admitted my sin-sickness to you and did not hide my character-deformity. I said, "I will confess my selfishness to the Lord"—and you healed me and freed me from guilt. Therefore let all the faithful ask you for this same healing while healing is still possible; then when the guilt, shame and regrets of life come flooding in, the faithful will not drown in them. You are my safe harbor; you protect me from the storms of life and turn my life into a song of deliverance. Psalm 32:5-7 REM.

- I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you. Psalm 32:8-9 NKJV.
- The Lord says, "I will teach you my methods and how to live in harmony with my designs; I will guide you and watch over you. Don’t be like the unthinking horse or mule that do not reason or understand and must be forced by bit and bridle to follow the simplest instructions.” Psalm 32:8-9 REM.

- Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him. Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart! Psalm 32:10-11 NKJV.
- Many are the sufferings of those who defy your designs, but those who trust the Lord are healed by his never-failing love. Celebrate God’s goodness and be happy, you spiritually-healthy; sing for joy, all you with hearts like God’s! Psalm 32:10-11 REM.

TUESDAY

The lesson focuses on the use of literary assistants in the writing of the Bible. Do you have any concerns about this?

Paul used a scribe or someone to write for him, as did others.

Does this cause any concern for the reliability of the Scripture?

As long as the final product is approved by the inspired person, I see no problem.

In most of my writings I have editors that edit and send back to me for review and approval. That process always improves my writings and makes it more accurate and easier to access. The editors sometimes make suggestions that would change the intended meaning, and in those cases I do not accept their recommendations. As long as such a process occurs with the inspired authors I see no problem.

Read the last paragraph,

- This suggests that, while remaining faithful to the thoughts and meaning of God's messengers, the vocabulary and sentence construction might reflect the varying literary abilities of the assistants they employed. It's the thoughts that are inspired, not necessarily the specific words used to express those inspired thoughts. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2026*, *The Gift of Prophecy*, p. 49.

This is exactly right—as long as faithful to the thoughts and meaning—not the specific words, sentence structure, vocabulary or even original language. That is why it is legitimate to translate from Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek into other languages.

And this is why paraphrases are not only legitimate but required if one wants to get the most accurate meaning across.

WEDNESDAY

What about the question of literary sources?

First, do we find evidence in the Bible of the inspired writers copying other writings into their own and sometimes not citing the original source?

The lesson references Ecc 12:9,10 which suggests Solomon didn't write all the wise sayings himself, but collected some in addition to writing many. Is this a problem if Solomon didn't write all the ones he put together?

Read the fourth and fifth paragraphs,

- Ezra and Nehemiah are other examples of Bible writers who relied upon historical records to document their accounts. Ezra includes copies of letters and royal decrees regarding Jerusalem and Persia (see Ezra 4–7), and Nehemiah tells us about genealogical registries that he found and incorporated into his narrative (see Neh. 7:5–72).

  This principle appears in the New Testament as well. "It is clear from Luke's experience that Inspiration functions in a manner consistent with the natural operation of the mental faculties and does not set them aside. Here is an inspired writer who was led by the Holy Spirit to give diligent study to the available oral and written source materials on the life of Christ, and then to

combine into a connected narrative the information thus gathered."—The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 669. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2026*, *The Gift of Prophecy*, p. 50.

Is this a problem?

What if we discover the author of the book copied someone else's work in their book and didn't give credit to the original author—is that a concern? Why or why not?

Why is the original source not the concern, and if people focus on the source as the primary question they get deceived?

What is the primary question—is it true or not, not who wrote it. Truth is authoritative, not the source.

Consider if you had a loved one dying of cancer and all the doctors told you there was no cure, but you found in an obscure medical journal written about 100 years ago a treatment for this cancer from a certain blend of herbs. Since your loved one is dying you have nothing to lose so you give it a try and low and behold, your loved one is cured. The cancer goes into remission.

Sadly, a few years later you another loved one is diagnosed with the same cancer and given the same grim terminal prognosis by the doctors. And in the interim you discover that the article you read in the obscure medical journal with the remedy that cured your loved one was plagiarized, that the author had copied it from another and did not give them credit. What would you do? Would you say, well it is borrowed, copied without credit, illegally plagiarized, therefore it should be rejected? Or would you say, the literary source doesn't matter, what matters is that it is true, it works, it heals.

Any application to this in our understanding of inspired writings?

THURSDAY

The lesson focuses on the difference between the divine message and the imperfect messenger—what is the difference?

Can God send a divine message through an imperfect messenger?

Read third paragraph,

- The humanity of God's messengers is not overridden by their divine calling to communicate the treasures of truth, as Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:7. Nor does it appear that the Holy Spirit saw fit to prevent His messengers from making statements and writing words that we today find hard to harmonize or to explain. However few these verses are, it takes a very narrow mind to stumble over them. As Bible-believing Christians, we are to surrender to the Word of God to the degree that we understand it and trust the Lord, despite what we don't understand. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2026*, *The Gift of Prophecy*, p. 51.

What does this mean?

What makes it hard for you to understand the Bible?

- The language, the way it is rendered. Are some translations easier to understand than others?
- What about when we read passages in isolation—could that actually make it hard to understand truth? Does understanding the context of the situation help us understand the meaning?
- What about not accurately understanding the symbolic language?
- What about not understanding the culture and norms of the time when it was written?
- What about taking everything literally?
- What about reading through the lens of imposed law?
- What about someone reading without surrendering to the Holy Spirit?
    - why would this interfere with understanding the Bible?
    - doesn't the Bible contain truth?
    - why would the Holy Spirit be necessary to understand the truth?
    - because the spirit of fear corrupts the mind's ability to comprehend reality, truth, and our condition twists the evidence to fit the internal distortions.
- What about reading through the lens of church tradition?

Why is the Bible written like this?

Because it is a book of reality, inspired by God, to reveal how reality functions, and provide us reality-based platform to think, reason, study, compare the text with nature, science, life experience, and weigh things out for ourselves and come to our own conclusion.

Just like a mathematics textbook is not just a key of correct answers, but has instructions, the principles of mathematics, exemplar problems and solutions, and explanations, but then has many unsolved problems for the student to work to solve. Why?

Why does the God teach that we must come and reason with Him in order to be cleansed from sin—what is the reality-based reason for this Isaiah 1:18?

Why does the Bible teach that everyone must be fully persuaded in their own mind of the truth Romans 14:5?

Why does the Bible teach that the wicked or lost not for believing a wrong idea but for not loving the truth 2 Thessalonians 2:10?

What is the ultimate purpose of the Bible—to lead us to what? The knowledge of God, which means what? That we consistently love and trust Him in all things!

And what is that to be based upon? The truth, the truth will set you free.

Thus the Bible is the divinely inspired record of reality that reveals history and is so amazingly constructing that all the parts cohesively work together to reveal the same consistent reality that God is love, truth, reliable, the source of life, who is always for us, never against us and sin is corruption, defect, internalized error, lies, that breaks love and trust and severs us from our connection to God, the only source of life. And that only by returning to love and trust in God, built upon truth can we be saved from this terminal sin condition. And the only way for that to happen is through Christ, what He accomplished for us, by becoming a real human being, partaking of the life descended from Adam, the life corrupted by the spirit of fear and selfishness, and by being incarnate, Jesus is the living human being through whom God breathed into the species a new sinless breath of life at His incarnation with the Holy Spirit conceived Christ's human body within Mary.

But that was not enough to save us. That new breath of life, the sinless spirit of love and trust, must be chosen by the living human, by Jesus. And Jesus lived as a human and was tempted in all points like us yet without sin. In the humanity of Jesus He experienced the fear, anguish, emotional guilt, feelings of shame, and fear of death that came from the spirit of fear He inherited from Adam through Mary. Yet in every case, Jesus chose with His humanity to live only in harmony with love and trust in His Father. And Jesus took that terminal spirit of fear to the cross and eliminated it from His humanity and rose again in a perfected and purified humanity, the second Adam, the new head of the species created in Eden. And now we can receive a new life when we are restored to trust, the HS brings us the life of Christ and we are reborn with new heart and right spirit.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SWAHILI: *Could It Be This Simple?* is now available in Swahili. It is available on our website for digital download. And Kenyans who would like a print copy please email Wycliffe at kenya@comeandreason.com